Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C)
Peer Review Process
2010-2011

To: Vermont 21st CCLC Grantees
Re: Peer Review Process
Date: September 13, 2010

The following pages outline the VT21C peer review process. Participation is required for VT21C grantees. In most cases, projects go through this process at least once in a three year cycle. Projects are selected and prioritized based on an annual assessment of need. Projects that are not chosen for the process in a given year can always request a visit. All efforts will be made to meet grantee requests as time allows.

Certain factors may require that some projects are visited more frequently or on a different schedule (e.g., during a project's first year of operation, as a follow-up to an earlier visit where significant findings were noted, when a project experiences a change in leadership).

The spirit of the design is to work collaboratively with the Vermont Department of Education, VT21C peers, and others on the local level to address the continuous improvement of 21C funded afterschool programs and to set, achieve, and maintain high-quality standards for afterschool in Vermont.

<u>**What do I need to do?**</u>

1. **Choose a date for a site visit.** Meetings with visiting teams usually run from 10:00am-5:30pm. A sign-up list of projects and dates is posted on the Vermontafterschool wiki. Documentation and reports will all be housed and managed through the wiki. Because of this, hard copies binders are not required to be produced for the visiting team. If you have any questions, please email Emanuel Betz at Emanuel.betz@state.vt.us

2. **Prepare supporting materials.** Programs will want to gather and prepare a variety of documents and materials to inform the peer review process. These items fall into three main categories: (i) Posting Pre-Visit Materials; (ii) Completing the Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool; and (iii) Posting other Supporting Documents and Evidence.
   i. **Posting Pre-Visit Materials-** all projects must include the following five items as part of their review (Items A-E below). These five items must be submitted electronically in a designated wiki folder at least three weeks before the scheduled visit. These materials will be shared with all members of the visiting team and will serve to familiarize team members with your program.

A. <u>Program Policies and Procedures</u>- Provide a copy of your program's handbook including essential policies and procedures for afterschool.
B. <u>Program Brochure and Attendance data</u>- The team needs to know what programs have run and are running for the current year and basic attendance information for each program. Submit program brochures and attendance info for each program.
C. <u>Budget Update and Expenditure Report</u>- Provide a budget table listing expenditures by category or use a printout of actual expenditures to-date (since July 1, 2010) During the visit, budget actuals will be reviewed.
D. <u>Memorandum of Agreement with Community/ School Partners</u>- provide the latest copy of your MOA with community/school partners or, if no updates have occurred, use the one from your original grant application.
E. <u>Governance Board Members</u>- provide a list of all members of your governance/advisory team and any other info about the governance structure (please provide names as well as affiliations).

ii. **Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool** - Using the charts below, rate your project in each of the ten quality areas. It is often most useful to have multiple stakeholders complete the self-assessment and compare results. When rating, note that the column for "How/Next Action Steps" will likely provide more useful information than the numerical rating itself. Provide either an aggregate copy or individual results before the site visit. To get a survey monkey copy of the Tool, contact Emanuel Betz.

iii. **Other Supporting Documents and Evidence**- As part of the process, projects should provide evidence and documentation to show that the project is adequately meeting expectations. Documents may include lesson planning tools, evaluation reports, newsletters, commendations, awards, etc.

3. **Set meeting agenda.** Create an agenda on the wiki in collaboration with VTDOE for the visit starting with a 2 hr meeting with the VT21C Director, followed by meetings with key partners (e.g., teachers, parents, students, advisory board members, principals), and a program visit. If you have multiple sites, you will want to target the focus of the visit or it may be possible for the visiting team to separate into multiple groups in order to visit different locations.

   Suggested Agenda
   10:00-11:00pm   Meeting with the Project Director
                              Sections E, A, and C
   11.00-12.00pm   Meeting with the Project Director
                              Sections B and D
   12.00-12.30pm   Lunch: no meetings (everyone brings lunch)
   12:30-1:30pm   Breakout meetings of 20-30 minutes each: All sections

1:30-2:30pm	Breakout meetings of 20-30 minutes each: All sections
2:30-5:30	Visit programs (talk with students, parents, teachers and others on-site) Sections A and C
End of visit	Visiting team debrief

Note: When looking at the process, if there are particular areas (weak or otherwise) that you would specific attention paid to, build this into the schedule and communicate your desire to VTDOE. Be sure to allow time for travel and extra time in the agenda with nothing scheduled to provide space for deeper conversations.

4. **Host Visiting Team.** VTDOE will form a visiting team to come to your site(s) on your selected date. The visiting team will be made up of VTDOE staff, and may include VT21C staff and directors from other Vermont projects, and other professionals and practitioners working in the afterschool, youth development, or education field.

5. **Receive a report.** Within two weeks of your site visit, you will receive a report outlining the visiting team's comments, recommendations, priority action items, and findings, if any. After receiving this report, read through the report and identify action steps to address suggestions or implement changes as needed. There will be a period of time to accept the report. Shortly afterwards you will receive a follow-up phone call or email as needed from the team leader to go over the visiting team's report, answer any of your questions, and to discuss follow-up if needed on any action steps, corrections, or program modifications

AfterSchool Quality Self-Assessment Tool

Use the tables below to rate your afterschool program in each of the ten quality areas: (1) Afterschool Program Leadership (2) Linkages to the School Day; (3) High-Quality Staff; (4) Safe and Appropriate Environment; (5) High-Interest Programming; (6) School Leadership Support; (7) Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families; (8) Instructional Leadership; (9) Flexible Structures and Student Choice; and (10) Community Partnerships and Sustainability. For each row in the table, read the expectation for a quality after school program and circle a number representing how your program meets that specific expectation. A score of 1 signifies an area where your program is in need of significant improvement. A score of 3 signifies a mid-level rating. A score of 5 signifies an area where your program fully meets or exceeds the expectation. It would be normal to expect that every program would have some low scores.

I. Afterschool Program Leadership (Director also = Site Coordinators)

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
1. Director has strong leadership and management skills.	1 2 3 4 5	
2. A governance system guides the program and is used appropriately by the director.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Director completes and submits all required reports and documentation to the VTDOE on-time.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. Director attends VTDOE Professional Development opportunities or sends other relevant staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. Director hosts required site visits and participates on visiting teams to other sites.	1 2 3 4 5	
6. Director communicates regularly with the VTDOE and makes VTDOE aware of any challenges or difficulties before they become too great to correct or improve.	1 2 3 4 5	

7. The program has a useful evaluation plan in place and activities are in line with its goals and objectives.	1 2 3 4 5	
8. Director has a system in place for the collection and analysis of program outcome data and uses that information for on-going program planning, improvement, and evaluation.	1 2 3 4 5	
9. Director has adequate time to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the position.	1 2 3 4 5	
10. The director's position is stable without frequent turnover.	1 2 3 4 5	
11. Director works well with staff, school personnel, parents/families, partners, and others.	1 2 3 4 5	
12. Director is able to explain the purpose and mission of the program and serves as a good representative of the best interests of the children/youth.	1 2 3 4 5	
13. Director has strong experience working in education, youth development, or afterschool.	1 2 3 4 5	
14. Director establishes and maintains well-developed systems and sound fiscal management for the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
15. Director participates in professional development opportunities and is continually increasing his/her knowledge and skills.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
16. Director has fostered a strong network of colleagues and other afterschool directors to support him/her in their work.	1 2 3 4 5	

II. Linkages to the School Day

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
17. Programs are connected to the school curricula and to the school's vision and goals.	1 2 3 4 5	
18. The program has the support and participation of the school day classroom teachers.	1 2 3 4 5	
19. Program director, site coordinator, or other staff communicates regularly with the school day administration, teachers, and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
20. The program has the support and cooperation of school personnel such as: custodians, kitchen staff, technology or media specialist, librarian, nurse, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
21. The program has the support and input of the curriculum coordinator and/or the reading/ math specialists.	1 2 3 4 5	
22. The program has support in meeting student needs from the ELL teachers, special ed teachers, guidance counselor, behavior specialist, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
23. Program has access to appropriate space and resources in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	

24. Program policies and procedures are in alignment with the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
25. Teaching strategies and methods used afterschool are in alignment with the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
26. Program activities and curricula augment and complement the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
27. Director and/or staff have a program office or space in the school building.	1 2 3 4 5	
28. Director and/or staff attend school faculty meetings or other appropriate team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
29. Director and/or site coordinator is visible in the school and considered an integral part of the school staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

III. High-Quality Staff

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
30. Staff are well-qualified and continuously improve.	1 2 3 4 5	
31. A careful hiring, screening, and interview process is in place for the recruitment and hiring of all staff and instructors.	1 2 3 4 5	
32. Staff are offered professional development opportunities throughout the year.	1 2 3 4 5	

33. Staff are given time and/or adequate compensation so that they are able to attend relevant trainings, workshops, and other professional development opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5	
34. Opportunities and formats exist for school day teachers to participate as instructors in the afterschool program.	1 2 3 4 5	
35. The program uses a variety of teachers, paraeducators, and other school staff to deliver programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
36. The program brings in outside experts and new materials and programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
37. Afterschool staff attend school in-service trainings or other appropriate meetings alongside school day staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
38. Program staff and instructors serve as good role models and build healthy relationships with the students.	1 2 3 4 5	
39. Program staff and instructors are able to meet and discuss the program regularly or as needed.	1 2 3 4 5	
40. A staff handbook exists and staff and instructors are all familiar with its contents.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
41. All staff and instructors participate in a staff orientation or other similar training when they are first hired.	1 2 3 4 5	
42. A positive workplace environment is cultivated.	1 2 3 4 5	
43. Staff retention and return rates are high.	1 2 3 4 5	
44. Staff and instructors receive adequate compensation and recognition for the work they perform.	1 2 3 4 5	
45. A system for staff evaluations and feedback exists and performance reviews are conducted each year.	1 2 3 4 5	
46. A system is in place by which the director collects regular feedback and input from the staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

IV. Safe and Appropriate Environment

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
47. Every student feels physically and emotionally safe in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
48. Every child has an adult on site who they feel comfortable talking to if they have a problem, concern, or if a need arises.	1 2 3 4 5	
49. Safety policies are clearly articulated in writing, shared with all parties (e.g., parents, staff, school), and followed accordingly.	1 2 3 4 5	

50. Safety policies include procedures for incidents, emergencies, mandated reporting, child abuse prevention, bullying, injuries, transportation, weather-related concerns, staff behavior, student behavior, record keeping, confidentiality, and communication with parents/guardians.	1 2 3 4 5	
51. Clear sign in/ sign out procedures are established, staff follow up on any absentees, and every child is accounted for before being released.	1 2 3 4 5	
52. The program uses spaces and student: teacher ratios that are appropriate and safe. (1-2:1 for tutoring; 1:5 for homework help and small group work; 10:1 for most programs)	1 2 3 4 5	
53. Grantee has made a review of state childcare licensing regulations and has made changes so that each site could pass licensure (if applicable).	1 2 3 4 5	
54. CPR/first aid trained staff are always on-site and EPI Pen training is addressed.	1 2 3 4 5	
55. Procedures are in place for identifying and dealing with allergies.	1 2 3 4 5	
56. Director is aware of any special needs or concerns of students and makes sure the program and staff are able to handle them appropriately.	1 2 3 4 5	

57. First aid kits are available and well-stocked.	1 2 3 4 5	
58. Telephones or walkie-talkies are available for communication between staff and parents.	1 2 3 4 5	
59. Director and staff have well organized paperwork. Coordinators have appropriate paperwork with them at all times, including: who is present, what programs they are attending, how they are going home, signed permission slips from parents, emergency contact information, and health information.	1 2 3 4 5	
60. Program follows the guidelines and requirements of mandated reporting.	1 2 3 4 5	
61. Program staff and stakeholders have reviewed emergency procedures and have practiced emergency drills.	1 2 3 4 5	
62. Program director and staff have met with school personnel responsible for school safety and have incorporated the afterschool time into the school's safety plan and crisis management plan.	1 2 3 4 5	
63. Students are offered a healthy snack each day following proper nutrition guidelines.	1 2 3 4 5	
64. Clear behavior policies exist in writing, are in alignment with the school, and have been communicated to students and their parents/ families.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
65. Program activities, materials, and spaces are age- and developmentally appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	
66. The program ensures children have access to safe and appropriate transportation to and from the program and for special events or program field trips.	1 2 3 4 5	
67. Any issues, problems, or concerns that arise during the afterschool program are communicated to the appropriate school day personnel the next school morning.	1 2 3 4 5	

V. High-Interest Programming

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
68. The program has a strong student participation rate.	1 2 3 4 5	
69. Program offerings are dynamic, exciting, and engaging.	1 2 3 4 5	
70. Programs are student-centered and every participant has a high-interest in what he/she is doing.	1 2 3 4 5	
71. Students of all targeted grades levels participate in the program in equal or appropriate ratios.	1 2 3 4 5	
72. Ample opportunities exist for students to play a leadership role in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
73. Students display ownership and pride in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
74. Programs include a culminating activity or other format where students can present or display their learning and accomplishments.	1 2 3 4 5	
75. Instructors are excited to teach in the program and seek out opportunities to work with the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

VI. School Leadership and Organization Support

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
76. The school principal is actively involved in supporting the program and meets regularly with the director.	1 2 3 4 5	
77. Director can rely on the school principal for support in solving problems or handling larger issues that may arise.	1 2 3 4 5	
78. The school principal and other personnel visit the program and attend special program events or activities.	1 2 3 4 5	
79. Director has access to or attends the school leadership team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
80. The school board or other relevant organizational board is aware of and supports the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

	Rating	
81. The afterschool program receives support and visibility through the school newsletter, annual report, bulletin boards, website, or other appropriate format.	1 2 3 4 5	
82. The school leaders speak highly of the program and recommend the program to students and families.	1 2 3 4 5	
83. The afterschool program is included in the school action plan as a viable option providing additional student supports.	1 2 3 4 5	
84. Members of the school leadership team play an active role on the advisory board, leadership team, or management team for the afterschool program.	1 2 3 4 5	
85. The fiscal agent provides proper oversight, organizational support, and fiscal management.	1 2 3 4 5	

VII. Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
86. Programs serve the needs of the students and their families.	1 2 3 4 5	
87. The program is structured and designed to encourage regular participation among students.	1 2 3 4 5	
88. The percentage of students in the after school program qualifying for free/reduced lunch reflects the overall percentage of the school/town/district.	1 2 3 4 5	

89. Program participation is equitable and appropriate between boys and girls.	1 2 3 4 5	
90. Parents/ families can easily reach program staff during the program or at other times during the day.	1 2 3 4 5	
91. Program staff have the time and availability to meet with parents/ families throughout the year and as needed.	1 2 3 4 5	
92. Staff are available and welcoming when parents/ families visit the program or come to pick up their child(ren).	1 2 3 4 5	
93. Special events and activities are offered that include parents and families and these events are well-attended.	1 2 3 4 5	
94. The program supports children/youth in strengthening their developmental assets and well-being, not only in improving their academic skills and learning.	1 2 3 4 5	
95. The program does a good job recruiting students and encouraging their regular participation.	1 2 3 4 5	
96. Parents and families are encouraged to speak with the staff, visit the program, participate in activities, or support the program in other ways.	1 2 3 4 5	
97. Sufficient program hours and days are offered to build regular attendance and to have a positive impact upon students.	1 2 3 4 5	

VIII. Instructional Leadership

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
98. Programs enhance student learning and developmentally appropriate growth.	1 2 3 4 5	
99. The goals and objectives of each program or activity are clearly defined and intentionally designed.	1 2 3 4 5	
100. A number of stakeholders, including students, help inform and design the programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
101. Program staff collect feedback and input from stakeholders to improve and adapt programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
102. Program staff incorporate knowledge of best practices and promising practices in selecting and designing programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
103. All instructors, stakeholders, and staff are aware of the program's goals and objectives and are familiar with the program's evaluation plan.	1 2 3 4 5	
104. Instructors have adequate planning time and prepare and execute engaging and intentionally thought out lesson plans for each class or activity.	1 2 3 4 5	

IX. Flexible Structures and Student Choice

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
105. Each participating student is offered a variety of age-appropriate learning and enrichment opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5	
106. Program uses flexible structures and varied instructional activities to accommodate students with different learning needs and learning paces.	1 2 3 4 5	
107. Programs provide students with exposure to a variety of subjects.	1 2 3 4 5	
108. Programs are of sufficient length, intensity, and duration to allow students to develop lasting skills and experiences.	1 2 3 4 5	
109. Opportunities exist for students to pursue their own interests and learning.	1 2 3 4 5	
110. Additional academic supports or tutoring is available for those students who need it.	1 2 3 4 5	
111. Grade levels are split appropriately and older students are offered different options and opportunities in line with their level of maturity, development, and interests.	1 2 3 4 5	

X. Community Partnerships and Program Sustainability

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
112. The program communicates with stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	
113. Successes are communicated to stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	
114. Program has the support and involvement of a diverse set of community partners.	1 2 3 4 5	
115. An active sustainability plan exists.	1 2 3 4 5	
116. A variety of contributing partners financially support the program including the school.	1 2 3 4 5	
117. Director can create a sustainability pie chart showing how different pieces of the budget can be funded by different sources.	1 2 3 4 5	
118. A viable sustainability team exists to assist the director in acquiring funding.	1 2 3 4 5	
119. Partners teach and share a common vision and for the children/ youth in the community.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Director's Checklist for

Program Management and Administration

Program Expectations	Rating	How/Next Action Steps
1. Programs follow the spirit and intention of the 21C legislation	YES NO	
2. Budgets are efficiently organized, updated, and monitored.	YES NO	
3. Director meets regularly with business manager to review accounts and reconcile differences.	YES NO	
4. A standard procedure is established for making purchases and tracking receipts.	YES NO	
5. Contracts and time sheets are in place for all employees.	YES NO	
6. Procedures and standards are established for paying instructors/staff in an equitable and appropriate manner.	YES NO	
7. Amendments are requested for changes to a line item or for a project change of scope.	YES NO	
8. No more than 30-40% of the budget is allocated towards administrative costs.	YES NO	
9. The project does not charge a percentage for indirect costs unless the supervisory union has an approved indirect rate.	YES NO	

10. All equipment purchases are inventoried. If used during the school day, the school has contributed to the purchase of the equipment at an appropriate level.	YES NO	
11. Grant funds are never used to supplant.	YES NO	
12. Director knows the total project costs of the program and has based sustainability and funding requests upon this number.	YES NO	List total cost:
13. An accounting structure has been established to ensure that all income and fees will be spent by the end of the grant period.	YES NO	
14. Questions, indicators, and objectives are articulated and realistic with an indicator, a target number, and a deadline.	YES NO	
15. Data is used for specific purposes and is related to the project's goals and objectives.	YES NO	
16. Student attendance data is tracked daily with clear sign in / sign out procedures.	YES NO	
17. All staff follow FERPA in handling and recording student data.	YES NO	

18. Person(s) responsible for collecting and synthesizing the data and using the database are facile with computers and electronic data management.	YES NO	
19. Director checks regularly (at least monthly) that data are being collected, cleaned and stored properly.	YES NO	
20. Regular back-ups are made of all data.	YES NO	

Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C)
Peer Review Report Template

Program expectations are listed in the Afterschool Quality Self Assessment Tool. In 2009-10, we are implementing targeted monitoring for selected VT21C projects. Through this process we are focusing in the following five areas of performance and operations when we visit a program: (1) Safety; (2) Fiscal Management; (3) Programming; (4) Governance; and (5) Project Outcomes. The VT21C Monitoring Tool will be used to drive the discussion during the site visit and to record comments, recommendations, and findings for the final report.

Project Name:
Director:
Date of Visit:
Visiting Team:

Overall comments or observations (Narrative):

Definitions

- **Findings: Findings** are steps that need to be taken immediately to be in-compliance with a law, regulation, or afterschool standard.
- **Priority Action Items**: Action items require follow-up by the grantee, but are less serious than a finding.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations are team judgments that could be classified as a "strong suggestions." They do not require action on the part of an LEA.
- **Comments:** Comments are suggestions generated from the team or from individual observations that warrants sharing. No action is required of a comment. They are included as food for thought.

Targeted Monitoring Area	Findings	Priority Action Items	Recommendations	Comments
A) Safety- Every VT21C program is required to provide for the physical and emotional safety of every child/ youth in the program. All programs are expected to have well documented policies and procedures that cover the day-to-day operations of the program as well as any emergency or special needs situations. Please refer to Section IV of the self-assessment tool (Items 47-67).				
Examples of Possible Evidence for Safety	● Program policies and procedures ● Documentation of hiring process ● Sign-in/sign-out sheets ● School emergency plan including the afterschool program ● Documentation of appropriate trainings for staff ● Staffing plan including student:teacher ratios ● Staff and instructor job descriptions/ qualifications ● Other related documents			
B) Fiscal Management- Every VT21C program must follow federal guidelines regarding the management of federal grant funds. Please refer to the Program Director's Checklist for Program Management and Administration.				

Examples of Possible Evidence for Fiscal Management	• Current expenditure report • Copy of approved budget and any amendment requests • Reasonable cost-per-student hour • Time sheets • Contracts • Job descriptions • Documentation of subcontracts • Other related documents
C) Programming- VT21C projects are expected to establish comprehensive centers and to offer a variety of high-quality programs and engaging learning opportunities. Programs should be intentional, well-designed, taught by highly qualified instructors, and meet the needs of the students in that community. Please refer to the following sections of the self-assessment tool: Sections VIII, III and II, V and IX.	
Examples of Possible Evidence for Programming	• Program chart • Program brochures • Programming planning sheets or lesson plans • Other related documents

D) Governance- When a community accepts VT21C funding, they take on the responsibility for creating, overseeing, and maintaining a high-quality, engaging program with proven outcomes for children and youth. Every VT21C project is expected to build strong linkages to the school day and to establish a viable governance structure that includes a variety of partners and stakeholders. Please refer to Sections I, VI, and X of the self-assessment tool.			
Examples of Possible Evidence for <u>Governance</u>	● Governance chart ● List of governance team members and responsibilities ● Meeting minutes ● Memorandum of Agreement with partners ● Other related documents		

E) Project Outcomes- VT21C programs are expected to serve children and youth in the eligible communities with special attention to providing opportunities and services for those students most in need. All projects are responsible for following through on their evaluation plan and for designing and running programs that best achieve the stated objectives of the grant. Please refer to Section VII (Items 86-97) of the self-assessment tool.				
Examples of Possible Evidence for Project Outcomes	- Program attendance - Attendance numbers for specific populations - Student products - Evaluation results - Survey results - Parent or teacher feedback - Results from pre- and post-tests			

Notes